



Denise Stiffarm

PARTNER

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PRACTICE AREAS

Municipal Law Public Policy and Political Matters
School Districts

Pronouns:
she, her, hers

Denise Stiffarm practices in the areas of municipal, land use, real estate, and education law. She spends a significant portion of her practice providing special counsel to public school districts. She also has experience working on a variety of public/private joint ventures and regularly advises public development authorities and other special purpose public entities.

Denise works with public clients on a range of issues, including growth management, land use planning and permitting, environmental (NEPA/SEPA) review, feasibility and site selection, acquisition/sale/lease of real property, eminent domain, facilities planning, and development and implementation of school impact fee programs. Denise's practice includes work on behalf of school districts in policy matters related to regional and local land use planning, and addressing comprehensive school mitigation in the context of large residential developments and master planned communities. She has drafted and negotiated a variety of complex real estate documents, interlocal agreements, and development agreements. In addition, she regularly counsels clients regarding the State Open Public Meetings Act and the Public Records Act, as well as general public agency compliance matters. Denise is an experienced advocate before state and local legislative bodies.

Denise is the managing partner of Pacifica Law Group. Prior to joining Pacifica, Denise was a partner at Preston Gates & Ellis LLP and its successor firm, K&L Gates.

Denise is an enrolled member of the Gros Ventre (Aaniiih/White Clay) Tribe.

Bar Admissions:

- Washington

Education:

- Washington State University, B.A., Sociology and Criminal Justice
- University of Washington School of Law, J.D., Notes & Comments Executive Editor, Washington Law Review, Order of the Barristers, Moot Court Honor Board

Honors:

- Selected for inclusion in *The Best Lawyers in America* in the fields of Education Law 2012-2026, Land Use and Zoning Law, 2024-2026, and as Lawyer of the Year in Education Law in Seattle, 2012, 2017, 2022, and 2026
- Selected for *Washington Super Lawyers*, 2011-2026
- Selected for *Washington Rising Stars*, 2004-2009

Community Involvement:

- University of Washington, Board of Regents, Term: September 29, 2025 to September 30, 2031
- United Way of King County, Board of Directors, 2020-Present
- One Roof Foundation, Board of Trustees, 2021-Present
- College Spark Washington, Board of Trustees, 2016-2025
- Seattle Art Museum, Board of Trustees, 2017-2024
- YWCA Seattle | King | Snohomish, Board of Directors 2011-2024 (Chair, 2022-2023)
- University of Washington President's Minority Community Advisory Committee, 2013-2022 (Chair, 2018-2021)
- Chief Seattle Club, former member, Board of Directors, 2002-2019 (President of the Board, 2008-2017)
- YouthCare, former Board member
- Audubon Washington, former Board member
- Seward Park Environmental and Audubon Center, former Board member
- Pioneer Square Preservation Board, former Board member
- Leadership Tomorrow, Class of 2001
- King County Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, former Trustee

Professional Organizations:

- Northwest Indian Bar Association
- National Native American Bar Association